

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

JANUARY 8, 2009

**LANSING CENTER
333 E. MICHIGAN
LANSING**

PRESENT FOR THE NRC

Frank Wheatlake, Vice-Chair
Mary Brown
Hurley Coleman, Jr.
John Madigan
J. R. Richardson

ABSENT FOR THE NRC

Keith Charters, Chairman

PRESENT FOR STAFF

Peter Manning, Legal Counsel
Rebecca Humphries, Director
Rodney Stokes, Chief of Staff
Mindy Koch, Resource Management Deputy
Stacy Welling, Upper Peninsula (UP) Field Deputy
Dan Eichinger, Legislative Liaison
Teresa Gloden, Assistant to the NRC
Other DNR Staff

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Vice Chairman Wheatlake called the Committee of the Whole meeting of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to order at 3:00 p.m.

Director's Action Items

Director Humphries thanked Pheasants Forever for cooperating with and assisting the DNR on the "Wildlife Land Acquisition, Gratiot-Saginaw State Game Area – Gratiot County, The Shiela Potter Trust Tract, Land Transaction Case #20080222."

Bear Patch Presentation

Adam Bump, Wildlife Division, introduced **Matt Pedigo, President**, and **Phil Hewitt, Vice President of the Board of Directors, Michigan Bear Hunters Association (MBHA)**, who said a Memorandum of Understanding between the DNR and MBHA regarding the bear patch program was developed. **Mr. Pedigo** thanked Adam Bump for assisting the MBHA in getting the patch done. So far 960 patches have been sold. Information on the bear patch will be included in the 2009 Michigan Bear Hunting Guide. **Mr. Hewitt** was thankful for the opportunity to participate in the patch development process and said it is the intent of the MBHA to continue this program in future years and conduct an annual bear patch design contest similar to the turkey patch contest. The NRC thanked the MBHA for their efforts in this process.

Parks and Recreation Update

Ron Olson, Chief, Parks and Recreation Division, reported that 489 events were held in parks and recreation areas in Michigan in 2008, and currently there are 255 events already scheduled on the 2009 calendar. The DNR will be celebrating the **90th Anniversary of Michigan State Parks (1919-2009)**. Statewide events are being scheduled with the “90th Anniversary Kick-Off” scheduled for June 20, 2009. This date coincides with the nationwide “Get Outdoors” event. More details are posted on the GO-Get Outdoors Calendar, located on the DNR web site under “Recreation and Camping,” or www.michigan.gov/dnrgogetoutdoors.

Ron Olson reported that camping reservations were down 6.8 percent compared to the same time in 2008 but said reservations are beginning to come in. He noted that camping reservations can be made up to six months in advance.

Murdock Jemerson, City of Lansing Parks and Recreation Department, and **Chuck Nelson, Michigan State University (both serve on the Citizen’s Committee for Michigan State Parks (CCSMP))**, reviewed the license plate proposal and noted that the CCSMP, on December 17, 2008 passed a resolution to amend the proposal to increase the License Plate Registration Fee to \$10 and asked for NRC support of this amended proposal. This resolution will next go to the Legislature for consideration. The goal of this proposal is to restore revenue to the State Parks system, provide funding for State forest recreation and provide grant opportunities for local units of government for development/renovation. A Legislative sponsor is being sought.

Following discussion, Commissioner Brown made a motion, supported by Commissioner Coleman, for support. Motion unanimously carried.

Legislative Update

Dan Eichinger, Legislative Liaison, reviewed pending legislation of DNR interest as follows:

- **HB 5771** - makes corrections to our assent legislation. This bill has been signed and given Public Act number **416** of 2008.
- **HB 5331** - eliminates the requirement to possess a bear hunting license in order to participate in a bear hunt, unless an individual is handling dogs or possesses a firearm. This bill has been signed and given Public Act number **347** of 2008.
- **SB 1489 & 1490** - make changes to the fee structure for snowmobile registrations and trail permits. These bills have been signed and given Public Act numbers **399** and **400** of 2008.
- **SB 1498** - allows individuals to display a flag from a standing vehicle indicating that they are legally permitted to hunt from a standing vehicle. This bill has been signed and given Public Act number **365** of 2008.
- **SB 1615** - revises the procedure in which the Department processes applications for game bird breeding facilities. This Bill would remove the sunset clause for falconry regulations. This bill has only recently been presented to the Governor and has not yet been signed, however, Mr. Eichinger expects that it will be soon.

Mr. Eichinger reported that, effective January 1, 2009, there are 67 Democrats and 43 Republicans in the House of Representatives. He believes members of House committees should be named soon.

Currently, there are 21 Republicans and 16 Democrats in the Senate with a vacant seat left by Mark Schauer who was elected to Congress.

Washington, D.C. Report

M. Carol Bambery, General Counsel, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, submitted a written report. In her report she reported that the Third Annual Industry/Agency Coalition Summit was held on December 18, 2008. Forty state fish and wildlife agency leaders, including Director Rebecca Humphries, attended the Summit. **Commissioner Coleman** recommended determining Congressional connections on outdoor activities in Michigan. **Director Humphries** noted the Obama Administration is pushing for programs to reconnect to the outdoors.

Privately Owned Cervid Facility Moratorium Status

Last month, the DNR reported on efforts to inspect all cervid facilities and ensure that cervid facility owners were following the letter of the law in regards to biosecurity, animal testing and animal movement. It was agreed that the DNR should review its authorities and work with the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) to implement a moratorium on all new and expanded facilities, in order to focus our resources on addressing the current problems. The DNR has completed this review and neither the DNR, nor MDA, has the legal authority to impose such a moratorium. In order to implement such a moratorium, new legislation would need to be enacted. **Director Humphries** requested the support of the NRC in pursuing such authority.

2009 MUCC Conservation Agenda Review

Amy Spray and Dave Nyberg, Resource Policy Specialists for Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC), reviewed the 2009 MUCC Conservation Agenda and program changes. Changes include: Michigan Out-of-Doors Magazine goes digital for all affiliated club members; bi-weekly hunting/fishing/trapping regulations updates and articles; by-weekly policy report, the Conservation Insider; a new five minute spot on Michigan Out-of-Doors focused on conservation, MUCC policy and club activities, etc.; Institute for Conservation Education fundraising/launching a variety of educational initiatives; Retiring Wildlife Encounters program, and Camp for Kids renovations. The MUCC Conservation Agenda for 2009 was reviewed under the categories of access, sportsmen's heritage, protection, restoration and habitat. **Ms. Spray** noted that MUCC supports the DNR baiting ban and will support the ban in the Legislature.

Amy Spray noted that MUCC is working with fewer staff and resources, but is continuing to foster strong partnerships. The MUCC looks forward to working with the DNR on their Conservation Agenda.

Commissioner Coleman said he appreciates the MUCC's efforts and emphasized the importance of conservation education.

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The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. and the Public Appearances portion of the meeting convened at 4:30 p.m.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

David Wheeler, Mar-Vo Mineral, has marketed a mineral made specifically for wild whitetail deer that he believes would be an alternative to deer feed. His mineral contains selenium that aids in building the immune system.

Mr. Wheeler has met with **Dr. Steve Schmitt, DNR Veterinarian**, who

expressed some concern with his product. **Vice-Chairman Wheatlake** recommended further discussions with staff on this issue.

Ed Spinazzola was featured in the January 2009 edition of “Woods and Waters” promoting his proposal to allow the citizens of Michigan to create food plots on public land. He asked that the DNR consider his proposal. **Mr. Spinazzola** believes his proposal would improve habitat and improve wildlife nutrition.

Jack Kleinhardt, Michigan Wildlife Business Association, strongly disagrees with the deer feeding ban. He expressed concern with wildlife health as a result of the hard winter that is occurring in the Lower Peninsula.

George Schull, Clare, believes deer feeding and baiting should be allowed in areas with severe weather conditions. He questioned how turkeys can survive with the extreme weather conditions. **Vice Chairman Wheatlake** recommended he speak to DNR staff or go on the DNR website for information on turkey feeding methods.

Chauncey Moran supported the UP Citizen's Advisory Council and the issues being discussed and addressed.

William Audette, Lake Orion, supports full inclusion of the crossbow during those seasons where other archery equipment is permitted. He believes full inclusion would aid in recruitment and retention. He also believes this would aid women getting into hunting.

Jeff Kunkel supports lowering the minimum age for crossbow hunters to 10 and believes involvement creates retention.

PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION AWARD PRESENTATION

Director Humphries presented the Partners in Conservation Award to the Lansing Motorcycle Club. **Jim Hunt** from the Club was present to receive the award. The Club members regularly assist the DNR with projects related to forestry. They are active in the Adopt-a-Forest program, and have removed over 25 pickup truckloads of illegally dumped trash from public land since 2003. They are long-standing participants in the Adopt-a-Highway program as well. Members from Lansing Motorcycle Club have assisted the on trespass cleanups which include removing illegal buildings on state land and scrap tire removal. They have assisted law enforcement agencies by overseeing community service crews on various public projects.

Lansing Motorcycle Club members also complete trail restoration and maintenance on the North Missaukee and West Higgins Lake ORV trails and routes each year. Club members have conducted several tree planting projects

in the Kalkaska area, planting over 38,000 seedlings on six different site covering 26 acres since 2005.

The Lansing Motorcycle Club continues to be one of the DNR's best advocates and partners in sustainable forest management. The trails and public land that have been restored through their efforts will be used and enjoyed for generations to come.

For all of these things and many more, and for committing so much of their personal time to conserving Michigan's natural resources, **Director Humphries** said thank you and congratulations. **Lynne Boyd, Chief, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division**, said the Lansing Motorcycle Club is a very hard-working group and their efforts are unsurpassed.

Mr. Hunt said thank you for the recognition and is proud to be a steward of the land.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES continued

Bob McReavy, Roscommon County, believes that not issuing antlerless permits in Roscommon County is proving to be positive for the deer population.

Dean Hall, Michigan Bow Hunters Association, expressed concerns with crossbows being introduced for full inclusion in Michigan's archery season. He supports the change in criteria for obtaining a crossbow permit because it has allowed those who need them to remain in the field during archery season.

Jenness Wiegand commented on the noise levels coming from the Island Lake Shooting Range and believes the noise levels are increasing.

Ellen Nitz suggested gun barrel extensions and covering the rifle range at the Island Lake Shooting Range should be considered.

The Public Appearances portion of the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m. and the Regular Meeting of the NRC convened immediately.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 4, 2008 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Coleman made a motion, supported by Commissioner Madigan, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

POSSESSION, TRANSPORTATION, AND REHABILITATION OF LIVE WILD DEER, ELK AND MOOSE, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER TECHNICAL AMENDMENT OF AMENDMENT NO. 17 OF 2008

Commissioner Madigan made a motion, supported by Commissioner Richardson, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

DIRECTOR'S ACTION ITEMS

Director Humphries stated her intent to approve all of the Director's Action items on the Agenda on January 12, unless adverse comments are received that need consideration prior to approval.

NRC POLICY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Crossbow Discussion: The Crossbow Discussion Group, Co-Chaired by Commissioners Madigan and Richardson convened at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, January 8, 2008. See attached Minutes.

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries

The Committee convened at 12:45 p.m. on Thursday, January 8, 2008. See attached Minutes.

NRC Policy Committee on Technology, Information, Marketing and Education

The Committee convened at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 8, 2008. See attached Minutes.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Coleman apologized for missing meetings due to personal and professional commitments. However, he is glad to be back and appreciates the information and decisions that are made by the NRC and DNR.

Commissioners Madigan and Richardson complimented individuals who have participated in the crossbow discussions and said they are pleased with the direction of the discussions.

Commissioner Wheatlake commented that, in this economy, the DNR needs to be responsive to those who enjoy the outdoors.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

CROSSBOW DISCUSSION

JANUARY 8, 2009

Lansing Center
333 E. Michigan
Lansing

Commissioners Madigan, Richardson, Wheatlake and Coleman were present from the NRC. The meeting/discussion convened at 10:45 a.m.

Commissioner Madigan opened the discussion by explaining that this group was charged with addressing and recommending to the Legislature an expansion to crossbow usage. The Crossbow Disability Work Group previously recommended, and the DNR implemented, expanding the permit criteria. The purpose of the changes is to maximize resource usage opportunities without damaging the resource.

The meetings of this group are open to receive comments from the various groups on the crossbow issue.

Cecelia Gilson, DNR Licensing, provided an update on the number of crossbow permits issued from 2005-2008, as follows:

2005 – 1,753 Permits Issued
2006 – 1,897 Permits Issued
2007 – 2,040 Permits Issued
2008 – 2,813 Permits Issued (increase due to expanded permit)

Dennis Knapp, Assistant to the Resource Management Deputy, reviewed proposed options for expanded crossbow opportunities **for consideration and comment**. These three options result from discussions held at previous meetings.

- Option 1: Allow crossbows during any hunting season in which a firearm may be legally used (elk, bear, small game, early-regular-late firearm and muzzleloading deer, turkey, raccoon and predator, migratory bird).
- Option 2: Allow crossbows during the December 1 through January 1 bow and arrow deer season (bow and arrow deer license required).
- Option 3: Allow youth (12 through 16) and seniors (65 and older) to use crossbows during any deer season.

Mr. Knapp noted that, under current law, hunter orange is required for all hunters during daylight hunting hours from August 15 through April 30, except those taking deer or bear with bow and arrow, turkey hunters, or migratory bird hunters.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tim Pifher, Flint Chapter, Safari Club International, supports expanded crossbow options and supports all three options. He also would support lowering the minimum age to 10 years old.

Rory Mattson, Soil Conservation Districts, supports allowing crossbows in all seasons and recommended allowing individuals 50 and above to use crossbows.

Jerry Keck, Tuscola County Archers, supports Options 1 and 2 but not Option 3. He said there is a difference between “can’t” and “don’t want to” when it comes to ability to use a bow. He also expressed concern with allowing 10 year olds to use a crossbow because he does not believe they would make the transition to a conventional bow when able.

John Sullivan, Michigan Traditional Bowhunters, supports all three options but expressed some concern with the youth option.

Dean Hall, Michigan Bow Hunters Association, expressed concern with Option 3, suggesting that the ages may be arbitrary.

Michael Brownfield, Michigan Bow Hunters Association, expressed concern with advanced technologies when primitive weapons are approved.

Doug Brown, Michigan Bow Hunters, said Options 1 and 2 are fine. In Option 3, he does not believe everyone becomes able to hunt at the same time – especially in the 10 to 12 year old range.

Millard Holton supports all three Options.

Curtis Stone, Michigan United Deer Hunters, supports an additional Option to be “all inclusive.”

Bob Morgan supports Option 3 and to allow crossbows during the full archery season.

Jeff Kunkel supports Option 1 and Option 2, and supports Option 3 but suggested lowering the minimum age to 10. He also supports full inclusion. He suggested, at a minimum, consider allowing in the southern Lower Peninsula.

Amy Spray, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC), said that MUCC policy opposes the use of crossbows during archery season. She supports

Option 1 and believes the expanded permitting process that was an outcome of the Crossbow Disability Work Group provided expanded opportunities.

Jim De Clerck, Saginaw Field and Stream, supports Options 1 and 2. Relative to Option 3, he suggested lowering the age to 60 and older. He expressed safety concerns with the 10 to 12 year old age bracket. **Mr. De Clerck** supports retention of older hunters and suggested lowering the age to 60.

Amy Spray noted that tracking will be very important if a late archery season is implemented.

Dale McNamee, Upper Peninsula Sports Alliance, supports Option 3 but expressed concern with the youth portion.

Bruce Levey expressed concern with the electronic crossbow survey conducted by the DNR and said the results could have been skewed due to being able to comment more than once. **Commissioner Madigan** said the survey was mostly to get comments versus taking a tally of support for the various options. He said the Options will be primarily developed based on impact to the resource.

Commissioner Madigan noted that any decision made on this issue will be on a trial basis. If it is determined that the resource is negatively impacted, the regulations will be changed. Adjustments will be made as necessary throughout the process.

Discussion ensued.

Following discussion, **Commissioners Madigan and Richardson** asked staff to prepare a Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment with three Options as follows:

- Option 1: Allow crossbows during any hunting season in which a firearm may be legally used (elk, bear, small game, early-regular-late firearm and muzzleloading deer, turkey, raccoon and predator, migratory bird).
- Option 2: Allow crossbows during the December 1 through January 1 bow and arrow deer season (bow and arrow deer license required) in Zone 3.
- Option 3: Making crossbows legal for seniors (65 and older) during any deer hunting season.

Staff will prepare a Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment "FOR INFORMATION ONLY" for the February 5, 2009 NRC meeting and Action at the March 5, 2009 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at noon.

**NRC Policy Committee on
Technology, Information, Marketing and Education**

Minutes

**January 8, 2009
Lansing Center
Lansing, MI**

The meeting convened at 12:45 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Mary Brown, Hurley Coleman, J.R. Richardson, and Frank Wheatlake

Office of Communications Overview

Jon Spieles, Office of Communications, said the charge of the Office of Communications is to coordinate and administer the DNR's informational and educational outreach functions.

Dennis Fox, Office of Communications, said the Recruitment and Retention Section is made up of the shooting ranges and the operating shooting ranges, the Becoming an Outdoors Women program, archery education courses, after-school archery, archery in the schools, community archery, recreational safety curriculums, hunter education, marine, ORV, and snowmobile. The Section works closely with the Law Enforcement and Forest, Mineral and Fire Management divisions.

Ray Rustem, Office of Communications, noted that the Information Services Section is working on DNR branding - ensuring style, logo, and the mission statement are consistent, as well as ensuring the information the DNR is conveying to the public is consistent.

Richard Morscheck works with the Department of Management and Budget and rapid copy to review the printing of publications.

Tina Stojakovich is the liaison with the Department of Information Technology who oversees the states web presence. **Mr. Rustem** mentioned that the DNR's web site gets between two and three million hits per month, which is third only to Lottery and the Secretary of State.

The Office of Communications also provides information to the public through "Showcasing the DNR" articles – articles written on DNR happenings and are sent to weekly newspapers for publishing. Most papers utilize two to three articles per week.

Upcoming projects: The Office of Communications is piloting informational downloads at the Wilderness Visitor Center; visitors will be able to download visitor center tour information to their iPods, MP3, etc.

MySpace and Facebook groups will help keep DNR's groups and committees connected. Web focus groups are making sure the DNR web page is set to facilitate the information that the public is seeking.

Kevin Frailey briefly discussed that the foundation of the DNR conservation education for years has been at through interpretive programming at the visitor's centers. Currently, there are 10 full time interpreters at nine visitor centers around the state - seven in state parks and two in state fish hatcheries. **Jon Spieles** manages five northern interpretive sites and the UP pocket park; **Janet Canode** manages five southern interpretive sites; and **Natalie Elkins** manages outreach and education programs.

The State Explorer program adds an additional interpreter to about 40 state parks each summer. These seasonal employees, much like their full-time colleagues, interpret nature and the value of our natural resources to our visitors.

Salmon in the classroom: This year 102 schools are participating in this program - up from 76 last year. These participating schools received eggs from the DNR this past fall, will raise the fish all year long, and release the surviving smolts into an approved river or stream in May 2009. A DNR web site has been developed for the program, as well as a curriculum and teachers resource kit.

Project WILD: The DNR adopted the statewide management of Project WILD from Michigan State University this past year. Project WILD, developed by western fish and wildlife agencies about 25 years ago, is considered America's most renowned and successful conservation education curriculum. Project WILD workshops demonstrate, through various classroom and outdoor activities, the value of America's wildlife and the vital roll of wildlife management in its success.

Academy of Natural Resources: **Mr. Frailey** presented an update on the Academy and how the program got started. He mentioned that this year's academy had a total of 19 participants, including one college professor and an outdoor writer. The participants left with a lot of beneficial material that will be useful in their classrooms.

Outreach: Office of Communications staff participate in sports shows and spend time connecting with its stakeholders; **Gary Williams, Michigan State University Extension/DNR**, conducts outdoor skill clinics/programs; participates and works with the Boys & Girls Club, The Salvation Army, the City of Detroit Parks and Recreation Division, and several other surrounding area recreation centers and departments.

Exhibits and Displays: The DNR is fortunate to have one of the very best in the business, **Earl Wolf**, who has been designing DNR displays since the early 1970s. The office has a new universal 10' x 10' backdrop and a banner that is used at various functions.

Recruitment Efforts for Non-traditional or "New" Users

Mr. Rustem mentioned that non-traditional users are defined as those who enjoy Michigan's resources without buying a license; and diverse audiences based on ethnicity, gender, age, etc. Initiatives to recruit non-traditional users include National Archery in the Schools Program, Outdoor Skills Centers such as the DNR Pocket Park, Project WILD, Salmon in the Classroom, and the BOW program, to name a few.

Interdivisional Cooperation for Recruitment of Non-traditional Users

Natalie Elkins mentioned that her role with the office is to focus on developing relationships with other divisions where they don't yet exist, and fostering those that already do. Recruitment efforts at shows, have been standardized this season with funding support from Wildlife Division and resource divisions support for newly created banner-up displays. These displays can be taken when staff is invited to classrooms, career fairs, etc. Parks Division has developed an Outreach Team focusing on recruitment, and the Office of Communications staff support of the team.

Commissioner Brown mentioned the people we need to pay attention to the are the non-traditional users.

Commissioner Brown said the next meeting of the Committee will review technology issues - everything from the iPod to how internet functional we are with various sites (do we know how many search engines have DNR on them); reviewing the possibility of revising DNR web pages to suit users; and consider the possibility of having more information at welcome centers.

Commissioner Coleman mentioned that he has been making a lot of efforts to get people in his home-town of Saginaw involved and exposed to community recreation but said the interest he is looking for is not there. **Commissioner Coleman** said that he is excited about what he has seen and heard today.

The meeting adjourned at 1:58 p.m.

NRC POLICY COMMITTEE ON WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) Update

Gary Whelan, Fisheries Division, provided an update on the VHS situation in Michigan. He explained that the DNR has tested for VHS all over the state and there were no new detections of this disease in Michigan since 2007. The disease has not spread to every Michigan water body and seems to be growing very slowly. VHS was found in only one inland lake in 2007. Gary reminded the group that the disease cannot be removed from Michigan but the goal is to slow its growth and stop it from spreading. Next, Gary outlined the various actions the DNR has taken to help facilitate this goal. They include the following: Pathogen and disinfection testing; disease surveillance of greater than 13,000 fish; monitoring fish culture and fish farms, increasing brood stock testing; continuing coolwater cautions; and testing fish transfers. Gary also mentioned actions related to scientific collector's permits and the monitoring of large vessels and equipment. Some regulation changes have occurred since the disease emerged, which include prohibition of some species, a changed certification and tracking process, and uncertified bait restrictions.

Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Surveillance Update

Dr. Steve Schmitt provided an overview on the disease surveillance testing that occurred in 2008. The DNR tested a total of 15,366 deer, 154 elk and seven moose for bovine TB. There are seven culture positive animals and 23 "good suspects." All of these animals are from the five county area except one in northern Iosco County. Due to the finding in 2007 of a TB positive deer in Shiawassee County and one outside the modified accredited zone in Iosco County, the DNR is required to test a minimum of 300 deer annually in the 10-mile radius of the finding for five years. In Shiawassee in 2008, 442 deer were tested. All tested negative for TB. In Iosco, 341 were tested.

As for CWD, the DNR has tested 1,485 deer from the nine-township CWD surveillance zone, 3,633 from Kent County and the surrounding seven counties and a total of 8,913 deer statewide. In addition, the DNR tested 147 elk and seven moose. No positives were found. Since 1998, a total of 30,784 deer, 944 elk, and 48 moose have been tested for CWD. All tested negative. A total of 9,958 captive cervids have been tested by MDA since 2002. Only one deer was found positive from Kent County.

Law Enforcement Update

Lt. Dean Molnar provided an overview on the number of complaints and tickets that were issued during the fall hunting season. In December, non-RAP complaints increased 159 percent, the Report All Poaching (RAP) line had an

increase in calls of 267 percent, and the total number of calls was 211. From October through December there were 990 non-RAP complaints and 1,135 RAP complaints. There were 599 baiting tickets issued, there were 29 group patrols, and 500 warnings were issued. Conservation officers felt compliance with the baiting ban was higher than expected. Those individuals that did bait tended to try and conceal or put out smaller amounts.

Deer and Elk Season

Rod Clute, Wildlife Division, provided a brief overview of the 2008 deer and elk seasons. Deer license purchases were up 3 percent and there were 1 percent more hunters afield. Thus far, 11,000 online deer harvest surveys have been completed. At the December elk season, 220 licenses were issued and 176 elk were harvested. A January elk hunt will occur and 40 licenses will be issued.

Note: The taxidermy regulations have been moved for action in March.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Approved: _____

Keith J. Charters, Chair

Rebecca A. Humphries, Director